

'ROUND-ABOUT METHOD TO PROHIBIT STRIKES.

Washington.—Advocates of "can't-strike" legislation have confessed it is impossible to secure the passage of a law that specifically prohibits workers from quitting their employment.

The best that can be possibly secured is found in a bill reported by the senate committee on interstate commerce which does not prohibit strikes but makes extended reference to "threats" and "intimidations" where strikes on interstate railroads exist.

In reporting the bill Senator Newlands, chairman of the committee, made the interesting statement that while the power of strike is the only weapon which labor has, he does not concur with the views of his colleagues that this power should not be interfered with or suspended.

As reported, the bill provides that where a dispute arises that cannot be settled by the federal board of mediation and conciliation the president shall appoint two additional members, representing employees and the railroads. A report shall be made by the board within three months. If a strike occurs it shall be a criminal offense for any one to "knowingly and wilfully by physical force or threats or intimidation" interfere with the passage of trains or the United States mail. This provision, on its face, should not be opposed by any law-abiding citizen, but Senator Newlands, in explaining the purposes of the bill, revealed the "African in the woodpile."

"The committee," he said, "also took up in this bill the question of the protection by the federal government of trains operating in interstate commerce and the prevention of any restraint or hindrance of the operation of such trains. It has put in this bill which is reported a stringent provision making it a misdemeanor, punishable by fine or imprisonment, to hinder or to obstruct in any way the operation of the mails on trains moving in interstate commerce."

TO REGULATE JOB DEALERS.

Columbus, Ohio.—Private employment agencies in this State will be subject to strict regulation at the hands of the State industrial commission if the house follows the lead of the senate in passing a bill which aims to put an end to the importation of strikebreakers and to prevent fee-splitting between employers and agencies.

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UNION CIGAR MAKERS WIN NOTABLE VICTORY

Chicago.—In a circular issued to local unions, President Perkins of the Cigar Makers' International union declares that "the international union and the local unions have won a notable and far-reaching victory" in the decision by Justice Andrews of Syracuse, N. Y., in the case of Justin Seubert, Inc., cigar manufacturers, against the Cigar Makers' union, its officers and other trade unionists.

The firm was backed by the Anti-Boycott association and sued for a permanent injunction and \$100,000 damages on the ground that the union was engaged in a conspiracy, that it restrained trade and commerce, that the union label was illegal and that the boycott was unlawful.

The court upheld the union in every instance except the secondary boycott. This will be appealed by the cigar makers.

"Laborers may strike against their employers separately or together, for any reason or for no reason," said Justice Andrews. "Unless their object is illegal, outsiders, unions, or individuals may agree to and may help them. Persuasion may be used to induce dealers or customers not to buy the employer's goods from him or in the market. Unions may make rules on this subject and may discipline members who violate these rules."

The claim of the Seubert concern that the agreement of 10,000 manufacturers to use the union label is a combination in restraint of trade, was answered as follows by Justice Andrews:

"The authority to adopt such a label is given to the unions by statute. The very purpose of this authorized use is to enable purchasers to determine whether or not goods exposed for sale are made by union labor."

The court held that the secondary boycott is illegal and appointed a referee to assess damages. This portion of the decision will be appealed, even though, according to President Perkins, the half dozen customers, mentioned in the trial, cannot possibly prove a loss of \$1,000 "they will be lucky if they can prove \$500."

"All things considered," continues President Perkins, "the international union and the local unions have won a notable and far-reaching victory. Our case was similar to the latter's damage suit, in which they were assessed \$329,000."

The Anti-Boycott association is thoroughly dissatisfied with the decision, except the secondary boycott rule, and will appeal the case.

OPPOSE CONTROLLED EDUCATION.

Washington.—While the senate was considering an appropriation bill, Senator Chamberlain again recorded his opposition to the Carnegie and Rockefeller foundations.

"Give me the education of the youth of this country," he said, "and the control of \$100,000,000 or \$200,000,000 for a period of years to use as I please and I venture the prediction that in two or three generations I can practically change the ideals of America."

"The people of this country want no tainted fortunes to accomplish their happiness."

"Without any reflection upon the men who are lack of these foundations, to put ourselves in a position where they can influence the spirit of education in our public educational institutions is absolutely out of harmony with the spirit of democracy."

"It is hostile not only to the spirit but to the best interests of free government that any man or group of men, outside of their direct participation in the current of the nation's life, should have any voice or influence in directing and shaping the spirit and policy and purpose of our educational institutions."

STRIKE TO ENFORCE STATE LAW.

Blaine, W. Va.—A State law provides that checkweighmen shall be placed at mine tipples. The purpose of this legislation is to assure miners pay for all coal mined and prohibit operators from robbing their employees.

When miners employed by the Smith Fuel company elected a checkweighman, to be paid by them, he was not allowed to go upon the tipple. After a three-days' strike the company withdrew its order and for the first time in this district miners have a representative at the weighing of coal.

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SEAMEN'S LAW DILUTED; SEA SAFETY SHATTERED

Washington.—The language and standard of skill clauses of the seamen's act have been practically nullified by circular No. 265, issued by the federal department of commerce, says President Furuseth of the International Seamen's union in a protest to congress. The senate has ordered the protest printed as a public document.

The circular instructs officials charged with the enforcement of the law that the language test shall consist of "only such orders as may be normally given to members of the crew in each department of the vessel in the course of the usual performance of their regular duties."

President Furuseth insists that the department of commerce has ignored the intent of congress which passed the language clause for emergencies and not for normal conditions.

"The misunderstanding of an order given under normal conditions," he says, "could not be attended with consequences sufficiently serious to engage the attention of congress. But emergency orders—orders given immediately preceding a collision or during a collision, a fire, or in some other disaster where life is at stake and where every second is precious—then the inability of any member of the crew to understand orders as they come directly from the master or other officer, may mean the loss of hundreds of lives."

Attention is called to the many disasters at sea, with loss of life and property, because of inefficient crews, which is made possible by circular No. 265. It is stated that United States, English, Holland and Norwegian ships are leaving ports of this country manned by lascars and Chinese.

"Ships even in the coastwise trade are manned by men unable to understand the officers, and the conditions in this respect are even worse than before the passage of the act," it is stated.

President Furuseth predicts that if Secretary Redfield's interpretation of section 13 (the language test) of the seamen's act is permitted to stand, ship owners may cite court decisions to secure a limitation of liability in suits for damages because of loss of life and property at sea.

PRISON REFORM URGED.

Trenton, N. J.—In a preliminary report on prison conditions in this State a commission has found 12 indictments against the State prison. These include poor food; failure to observe educational requirements of State law; punishing prisoners by lodgment in dungeons; violation of contract labor law and failure to exercise prisoners in the open air.

It is stated that convict labor should not be abolished entirely until provision has been made for the full operation of the State-use system, and that employment of prisoners at the prison farm, on the State roads and on other State-use work be given preference for the time being over contract labor.

"The commission declares that a prisoner suffering with tuberculosis, upon a sentence of two years or more, is virtually sentenced to death by disease."

DAMAGE AWARD APPEALED.

Bridgeport, Conn.—Machinists' union has appealed to the State supreme court from the verdict of the superior court which awarded damages against its members of \$5,000 to the Max Ams company.

The decision is based on section 1296 of the Connecticut statutes, which provide that any person who shall threaten "or use any means calculated or intended" to abstain from doing any act which such person has a legal right to do, shall be fined or imprisoned.

Trade unionists are trying to have this law amended. They show that section 1296 would make the act of a unionist criminal if he dared to argue with a strikebreaker, who has a legal right to work in a struck plant.

FIREMEN RAISE WAGES.

Wheeling, W. Va.—Stationary Firemen's union No. 21 has signed a one-year agreement with the Ohio Valley General Hospital. Wages are increased \$10 a month.

LAUNDRY WORKERS GAIN.

Coalgate, Okla.—The Laundry Workers' union has raised wages 25 cents a day. Improved working conditions are also included in the new contract.

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WON'T OPPOSE PICKETING.

Oakland, Cal.—The city council has refused to place on the spring election ballot a proposed anti-picketing ordinance submitted by the Employers' association. The ordinance would make it unlawful to picket or display banners of any kind on the streets. The employers announce they will initiate the ordinance despite the council's action.

PROBES WOULD BE FRUITLESS.

Cleveland, Ohio.—An investigation of the eight-hour demand of railroad train service employees, so much desired by "can't strike" advocates, will prove nothing, says the Railroad Trainman, official magazine of the Brotherhood of Railroad Trainmen.

The speed basis now is 100 miles for 10 hours and the employees say that eight hours can be secured if freight trains are speeded up to 12½ miles an hour.

"The fact that the requested speed basis is in operation on many lines," says the Railroad Trainman, "and according to the statements of the western railroads, under oath, that 78 per cent of their through freight business is carried on at the same speed basis, answers that contention; while the earnings of the railroads answer their inability to pay. Just what can be developed that already is not known is not easily realized."

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WOMEN'S 8-HOUR LAW OPPOSED.

St. Louis, Mo.—Officials of the Bemis Bag company oppose an eight-hour law for women. These business men say their machines are now speeded up to the limit and a reduction of hours would reduce production and put them at a disadvantage with competitors. The effect of long hours on women is not considered.

EIGHT HOURS FOR PAINTERS.

Eldorado, Kan.—The Painters' Union, organized last December, has secured the eight-hour day and substantial wage increases.

Abilene, Kan.—Painters have increased wages 25 cents a day and reduced the work day one hour.